



## Enewsletter

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[How to Photograph National Parks](#)

## **Rick and Dody Sheremeta head out on a monthlong road trip with the Tamron SP 70-300mm VC, 18-270mm VC, and SP 10-24mm lenses.**

Article By Jennifer Gidman

Images by Rick and Dody Sheremeta

When you get the opportunity to travel for four weeks across the scenic expanses of Colorado, Utah, and Montana, you bring a camera. At least, photographers Rick and Dody Sheremeta do. The couple traversed some of the most iconic American landscapes with their imaging gear, including the Tamron [SP 70-300mm VC](#), [18-270mm VC](#), and [SP 10-24mm](#) lenses, to capture the beauty of the Bryce Canyon, Zion, Arches, and Mesa Verde national parks, as well as Montana's historic Bannack Ghost Town.

Read on for Rick's tips on how to photograph the natural beauty of these amazing landscapes while also highlighting the history of these often-legendary locations.

**Show the old-time feel of a location by converting to black-and-white.**

Bannack State Park is a ghost town in southwestern Montana, a former mining community that was the site of a gold strike in the 1860s, and also the short-lived state capital. The town

was abandoned virtually overnight when the capital moved to Virginia City. Now it's a preserved community, where you can go into most of the buildings, even though many of them are vacant.

One of the ways I like to convey that sense of abandonment and of lost time is by converting my images to black-and-white. Old trucks, for example, are one of my favorite things to shoot in this area, and I have a series in which I did a straight color image of one of the vehicles, then a black-and-white, then a sepia-toned version.



When certain colors are rusted out or not that vibrant, that's also a great time to use a little HDR enhancement and transform that weak color into a strong HDR shot. It gives the image a much wilder look, and it also allows you to shoot in the harsher light of midday. That bright light is very contrasty, which is perfect for a black-and-white image (see my [detailed article](#) on this black-and-white conversion process in the August 2012 issue of *Outdoor Photographer*).

**Use natural elements to draw viewers into the image.**

You want to pull the viewers into your shots, so it's important to use the naturally occurring lines and aesthetics of the landscapes you're photographing. I always try to get my shots leading from left to right or to put the image on a diagonal. When we were in the slot canyons, for example, I simply followed the rock striations to show the different layers and the erosion. For another river shot, I pulled a bunch of different-colored pebbles into the foreground.



**Capture landscapes at all times of day for different perspectives.**

When we were at Arches National Park, we were able to show the scenery at all different times of day for unique images. Depending on your lighting, you'll see a variety of textures in the rock. One of our panoramics, with the shadow spread across the lower half, was taken around 9 a.m., before the light got really contrasty. Then later in the day, around 3 p.m., we played with the shadows some more for a completely different look. Finally, we hung out until sunset to show the Arches in that gorgeous evening light.



**Incorporate people or other elements into wide shots for scale.**

We were coming back from a midmorning hike on the Navajo Loop Trail in Bryce Canyon when we saw people in the distance. And it wasn't just people — it was people on horseback, evocative of the Wild West. We were like a couple of kids in the candy store when we saw that because of the tremendous sense of scale it gave us. We got two especially nice images of that scene: In the first, the rock formation is in the foreground, but it's got some depth to it, so it leads your eye into the image. The second one is a portrait format, with the horses at the bottom of the image. It gives you the sense they're in the foreground, but they're really half a mile away.



**Get the big picture, as well as the detail shots.**

In the Anasazi villages of Mesa Verde National Park, we were able to take lots of pictures of the ancient villages, including the Spruce Tree House and Cliff Palace, which is believed to be the largest cliff dwelling in America. Some of the areas aren't open to the public, but you can wander around the perimeter and get some wide-angle shots of the dwellings. In some of the other areas, there are ranger-led tours, so you can get a little closer for great detail shots, like of the rock petroglyphs.



**The landscapes are beautiful — but don't be afraid to venture into the water.**

Part of our trip was doing a photo shoot for the Advanced Elements kayak company at Lake Powell with the 70-300 and 10-24 lenses. We completed the shoot over a three-day period, and we tried to get out first thing in the morning or in the evening, when the light was really golden. Our dogs, who are our constant traveling companions, came out with us, and Dody had one of them in the boat with her while I was shooting from a nearby pier. That evening

light really showed off the golden retriever's fur!



To see more of Rick and Dody Sheremeta's work, go to <http://alpenglowproductions.com>.